

The flourishing-happiness concordance thesis: some troubling counterexamples

Kristjánsson, Kristján

DOI:

[10.1080/17439760.2017.1365159](https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2017.1365159)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Kristjánsson, K 2017, 'The flourishing-happiness concordance thesis: some troubling counterexamples', *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2017.1365159>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

Publisher Rights Statement:

Checked for eligibility: 03/08/2017

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Journal of Positive Psychology* on 09 Aug 2017, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17439760.2017.1365159>

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

The Flourishing–Happiness Concordance Thesis:

Some Troubling Counterexamples

Kristján Kristjánsson

Abstract

The aim of this article is to explore and critique recent aspirations to bridge the traditional divide between subjective and objective accounts of wellbeing through a psychological concordance thesis, according to which flourishing and happiness will, for psychological reasons, go hand in hand. Two varieties of the concordance thesis are explored, one psychological in origin and the other philosophical, with a special focus on the latter (derived from Aristotle) as it makes more radical psychological claims. Counterexamples are provided and discussed of unhappy and not-happy-enough flourishers, and of happy and not-unhappy-enough non-flourishers. The implications of those counterexamples are elicited, with the conclusion being that normative claims about the relative priority of flourishing over happiness (or vice versa) for wellbeing cannot be avoided with impunity. The concordance thesis does not seem to bear scrutiny, at least not as a thesis about ‘psychological necessity’; however, this leaves both a less demanding ‘rule-of-thumb’ concordance thesis, and a host of complementary theses about flourishing and happiness, intact.

Key words

flourishing; happiness; concordance; Aristotle; Sheldon

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Professor Kristján Kristjánsson, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, U.K. Email: k.kristjansson@bham.ac.uk

Introduction: Subjective versus Objective Wellbeing

The aim of this article is to explore, and ultimately cast doubt upon, recent aspirations to bridge the traditional divide between subjective and objective accounts of wellbeing (and to deconstruct the standard debate between their proponents) through a psychological concordance thesis, according to which objective and subjective wellbeing will, for psychological reasons, go hand in hand. More theoretically speaking, the concordance thesis holds that the regions of subjective and objective wellbeing – when correctly conceptualised and measured – penetrate each other so thoroughly that neither can be set against the other as its anti-thesis. While the background to this debate is well-rehearsed of late, the angle from which I propose to investigate the concordance thesis bears explanation; hence, some context-setting is in order at the outset.

Human wellbeing is being studied with more vigour than ever before. It helps that a number of economists have joined the standard line-up of psychologists and philosophers on the wellbeing bandwagon: a result of increasing disillusionment in economics circles with GDP as the be-all-and-end-all proxy for wellbeing. Considerable consensus exists across philosophies, cultures and religions in seeing wellbeing as the ungrounded grounder of all human strivings. In some theories, ‘wellbeing’ is simply defined as ‘whatever ultimately grounds any other (subsidiary) human aims’, in which case the claim that wellbeing is the final goal of human life becomes a truism. It then encompasses views as diverse as Kantianism or religious fundamentalism, according to which the ultimate goal of life is unpacked as obedience to the ‘moral law’ or to ‘God’, respectively. More parsimoniously and informatively, however, wellbeing is seen to lay the basis for consequentialist or teleological world-views, for example of the utilitarian or virtue ethical kind, that explicitly incorporate the terms ‘wellbeing’, ‘happiness’ or ‘flourishing’ into their substantive accounts of the ultimate source of value.

Whilst recent research on wellbeing may seem to take us in a bewildering variety of directions, with conceptualisations and interpretations running rampant (see e.g. Vittersø, 2016), the different accounts typically seem, on closer inspection, to congeal into one of the two antitheses of *subjectivism* or *objectivism*. The subjective accounts focus either on pleasure, understood as high positive affect and low negative affect – making up so-called *hedonic* accounts – or on *life-satisfaction*, with the two often combined in measurements as ‘SWB’ (Diener, 2012). In contrast, the objective ones tend to hark back to the Aristotelian notion of *eudaimonia* – constituting so-called *flourishing* or *eudaimonic* accounts (Fowers, 2016). Each type of account comes with its own familiar pathology. To jog readers’ memories, hedonic accounts face the problems of the ‘pleasure machine’ (or of living in a fool’s paradise) and the ‘hedonic treadmill’; life-satisfaction accounts typically meet with the objections that lowering expectations and dulling desires can, on their specification, raise wellbeing, and also that self-evaluations of life-satisfaction are worryingly dependent on fleeting moods; the SWB construct is critiqued for combining hedonic and life-satisfaction scores that often vary considerably for the same individual; finally, the flourishing accounts are accused of paternalism and elitism (see e.g. Haybron, 2008; Kristjánsson, 2013). Debates between proponents of those different accounts seem repetitive to the point of having grown stale. Unfortunately, there are no immaculate perceptions here or Archimedean starting points.

The current stalemate is compounded by two further factors. One has to do with the terminological disarray in the field. For example, the word ‘happiness’ is sometimes used synonymously with ‘wellbeing’, sometimes as a translation of Aristotle’s concept of *eudaimonia*, and sometimes applied to subjective wellbeing only. In order to avoid overusing the unwieldy terms ‘subjective wellbeing’ and ‘objective wellbeing’, I henceforth refer to the former

interchangeably as ‘happiness’ and the latter as ‘flourishing’. Although this may perhaps be seen as a controversial stipulation of meaning, I do consider the term ‘happiness’ in ordinary language to correspond reasonably well to the technical term ‘subjective wellbeing’ (cf. Tiberius, 2006, p. 494). Similarly, ‘flourishing’ captures satisfactorily the content of most objective-wellbeing accounts, although some of them depart substantially from Aristotle’s original notion of *eudaimonia* (for example, Seligman’s 2011 account; for a trenchant critique of such departures, see Keyes & Annas, 2009). In any case, because the heterogeneity of designators confuses newcomers to the field no end, some simplifications may be warranted.

The second compounding factor relates to the diverging research interests of psychologists, on the one hand, and philosophers, on the other. Their explorations of wellbeing sometimes seem to run on parallel lines without convergence – thus confounding readers who wish to peruse both academic sources. The problem is not so much that the majority of philosophers may incline towards flourishing and psychologists towards happiness (albeit with some notable exceptions), it is rather that they do not seem to be looking at these concepts through the same lenses and often do not cite each other’s work. This standoff has a varied methodological, theoretical and motivational origin (cf. Kristjánsson, 2016a). Philosophers often prioritise conceptual rigour (and the study of conceptual relations) over predictive value (and the study of empirical relations). Moreover, they tend not be as hung up over the ‘fact–value distinction’ as are psychologists who often equate it with the ‘is–ought distinction’.¹ What this

¹ This will, for many philosophers, seem to involve a conflation of normativity *qua* evaluativeness with normativity *qua* prescriptivity (see e.g. Kristjánsson, 2013, chap. 4). To cut a long story short, according to the ‘fact–value distinction’, the truth value of normative judgements is, contrary to that of factual judgements, relative to cultures (moral relativism) or individuals (moral subjectivism) – or normative judgements are seen as not having any truth value at all but simply express emotions, on a par with utterances such as ‘hurrah’ and ‘boo’. According to the ‘is–ought distinction’, factual judgements never entail normative claims. There is an ambiguity here, however, in the term ‘normative’. Someone could argue that (some) normative judgements (*qua* evaluations) have non-relative factual content while still endorsing the thesis that factual judgements never entail normative claims (*qua* prescriptions about what to do).

boils down to is some degree of mutual annoyance. For example, psychologists fail to understand why philosophers are not *au fait* with the latest empirical findings, or even do not seem to take them seriously. Philosophers are baffled why psychologists ignore established philosophical distinctions, like Mill's (1863) qualitative distinction between types of pleasures on grounds of their fecundity and depth, such that no quantity or intensity of 'lower pleasures' (e.g. eating chocolate) can ever compensate for the loss of a 'higher pleasure' (e.g. a loving relationship).

All this said, it is easy to overegg the extent to which philosophers and psychologists plead ignorance of each other's work on wellbeing (see e.g. Tiberius, 2006; MacLeod, 2015, p. 1074). In a recent article, MacLeod (2015) argues persuasively that the mutual lack of engagement is mostly unwarranted, as philosophical and psychological accounts of wellbeing can – conflicting terminologies notwithstanding – be plotted along the same continuum of views, ranging from extreme subjectivism to extreme objectivism. His 'unifying rather than adversarial' approach (2015, p. 1083) shows that, far from being as different as chalk and cheese, psychologies and philosophies of wellbeing are basically addressing the same fundamental questions about the nature of the good life. I follow MacLeod in the present article in seeing psychologists and philosophers as engaged in the same problematics, and I refrain from distinguishing between their views on grounds of their disciplinary origins only.

As already noted, the flourishing–happiness debate seems deadlocked. Yet these supposed anti-theses are protean and treacherous, often pretending to be one another. Furthermore, efforts have been underway for a long time to heal the schism in question with various hybrid or mixed accounts. For example, Seligman's (2011) PERMA-account² departs substantially from his earlier (2002) one, which Seligman now admits was just a happiness

² According to this account, wellbeing comprises the components of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment.

account in disguise, although it was meant to be ‘mixed’. While Seligman connects the new account to ‘flourishing’ and considers all the five PERMA-components to be underpinned by objective features (namely, character strengths and virtues: 2011, p. 24), it still retains some subjective features, most notably ‘positive emotion’, and can thus be designated as a hybrid account. Going further back, the insights of Ryff’s (1989) account of psychological wellbeing and Ryan and Deci’s (2001) self-determination theory make conciliatory moves in the direction of flourishing–happiness hybridity. Although both accounts tend to be categorised on the objective side of the spectrum – because they depart from a happiness-only orthodoxy in psychology – they do incorporate subjective elements also and thus support the idea of some sort of flourishing-happiness complementarity.

So far my context-setting has been conducted at a relatively high level of abstraction. The practical question that beckons is if it really matters whether wellbeing is measured subjectively or objectively: do the outcomes differ significantly? The short answer is that the empirical evidence here is both mixed and complex. Notice first that advocates of wellbeing as happiness unhesitatingly acknowledge the existence of various objective factors, such as education and income, as predictors *of* happiness, and of other objective factors as predicted *by* happiness, for instance health (see e.g. Diener, 2012), but they do not consider those factors to be *constituents* of wellbeing themselves (unless they understand health, for instance, in terms of ‘feeling healthy’). It is more instructive, therefore, to look at instruments of (putative) objective wellbeing. Consider, for example Ryff’s well-known *PWB* scale. As a whole, it correlates well with scales of *SWB* (on average $r = 0.32$; see Keyes, Shmotkin & Ryff, 2002).³ However, the devil lies in the detail. There are some dimensions on Ryff’s scale that do not correlate well with

³ Interestingly, in a large European study, the correlation between life satisfaction and flourishing (as defined there) turned out to be exactly the same, namely 0.32 (Huppert & So, 2009, p. 6).

SWB, especially positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life and autonomy (Ryff & Keyes, 1995, p. 723). Ryff takes this finding to indicate that key aspects of positive psychological functioning – that she takes to represent objective wellbeing – are not captured by standard measures of *SWB* (Ryff, 1989, p. 1077).

Here is the fly in the ointment, however. Ryff's scale of objective wellbeing, and most other similar scales (including the one from Huppert & So's European study, 2009), do not aspire to measure the putative objective factors (say, relationships, engagements, the exercise of capabilities/virtues) objectively but rather through self-reports of '*eudaimonic* experiences'. On Tiberius and Hall's plausible characterisation of an objective account as holding that 'there are at least some components of well-being whose status does not depend on people's attitudes toward them' (2010, p. 213), Ryff's scale scarcely passes muster as a measure of objective wellbeing. To the sceptical philosopher, it would be no surprise that a person's self-reported positive experiences of subjective and objective factors correlate well with one another. What matters to the philosopher – especially if she happens to subscribe to a flourishing account of wellbeing – is whether flourishing, *measured objectively*, correlates with *SWB*.⁴ This is a serious complication. Indeed, it is not only the case that there can be both objective and subjective measures of objective wellbeing; people's notorious lack of self-transparency (what Haybron, 2008, calls their 'affective ignorance'), coupled with temptations of social desirability, means that people can also be subjectively wrong about their own subjective wellbeing. Individuals sinking into depression are, for example, often the last to realise that they are not as happy as before and may

⁴ This is not to say that subjective (self-report) measures of objective wellbeing cannot yield important information above and beyond *SWB* measures. For example, Huppert and So's European study (2013) shows significant and salutary differences between different countries in terms of self-reported flourishing. Moreover, the instrument designed for this study is based on the ingenious idea of identifying and measuring mirror opposites of the symptoms of common mental disorders. What classic flourishing theorists in the Aristotelian tradition will complain about, however, is that this instrument does not measure flourishing objectively and that it misses crucial components such as the exhibition of moral and intellectual virtues (see below in the main text).

continue to score high on standard *SWB* self-report measures, although their friends and family would rate their ‘real’ happiness as low. Haybron (2008, chap. 10) makes heavy weather of this often un-accounted-for feature of happiness measures, although he does seem to think that discrepancies between subjectively and objectively measured happiness are likely to wash out over large samples.

So to return to the original question about flourishing–happiness correlations, more will potentially be gained by exploring associations between flourishing, measured objectively, and happiness. There is quite a long tradition of measuring supposed objective features of wellbeing objectively; MacLeod (2015, p. 1075) cites the UN Human Development Index as an ‘extreme example’ that judges the ‘wellbeing of nations’ exclusively in terms of years of education, gross domestic product and longevity. Comparisons of wellbeing understood in this radically objective flourishing-sense and happiness are far and few between, however. Oswald and Wu (2010) constitute an interesting exception, with their state-to-state comparisons of objective data about flourishing indicators in the USA and average scores of *SWB*. The indicators include factors such as temperature, sunshine, national parks, environmental ‘greenness’, commuting time, violent crime, air quality, spending on education and cost of living. Astoundingly, Oswald and Wu demonstrate a correlation of 0.6 between a weighted average of those factors and a state’s average *SWB* score – an outcome that vastly exceeds the norm in behavioural science.

Nevertheless, flourishing theorists, especially of the Aristotelian type, may continue to grumble that this study does not really measure associations between flourishing and happiness, but only between some of the *preconditions* of flourishing and happiness. Thus, in Aristotle’s theory, a fairly clear distinction is made between the preconditions of *eudaimonia* (including many of the factors that Oswald and Wu identify) and the constituents of *eudaimonia*. The latter

include, most prominently, the exercise of moral/civic and intellectual virtues, guided by the integrative meta-virtue of *phronesis* or practical wisdom (Kristjánsson, 2017). Although the distinction between preconditions and constituents of flourishing can be tenuous and difficult to sustain – either in Aristotelian theory or in practice – some attempt must be made to measure the constituents if the aim is to provide empirical ballast for a flourishing–happiness harmony thesis. Notably, given their avowed Aristotelian provenance (Fowers, 2016), the most glaring omission in almost all current measures of flourishing is the absence of virtue-related constructs (as correctly pointed out by Proctor & Tweed, 2016, p. 280). ‘Virtue’ here refers to stable traits of character that exhibit the appreciation, honouring and display of moral and intellectual values: traits that are, according to Aristotelian theory, the most significant constituents of flourishing (Kristjánsson, 2015, chap. 1). Moreover, for those to pass muster in measurements of flourishing, what must be captured is not only self-reported virtue (as in the currently popular VIA measures, based on Peterson & Seligman, 2004) but rather objective indicators of virtue (Kristjánsson, 2015, chap. 3). So, the most significant objective components of Aristotelian flourishing are either not measured at all, or they are just measured subjectively.

To sum up, if the hope was that questions of flourishing–happiness harmony could be settled by dint of empirical evidence, that hope has not borne fruit yet, specifically because of lack of suitable objective instruments to measure flourishing on a standard (Aristotle-inspired) conception. The only available recourse at the moment is, therefore, to return to theory. MacLeod (2015) helpfully refers to accounts that somehow want to harmonise subjective and objective features of wellbeing as ‘subjectivist’. I propose to go beyond MacLeod and divide wellbeing ‘subjectivism’ into two main categories: harmony as *complementarity* and harmony as *concordance*. The mixed accounts of Ryff, Ryan and Deci, and the later (2011) Seligman,

already mentioned, will then fall into the former category. They aim at weaving the warp and weft of objective and subjective wellbeing together by measuring both and adding the findings together. While the idea is that flourishing and happiness feed into or condition each other in various ways, and can be difficult to separate in practice, they can be held separate in theory. A good life is a life that has an abundance *of both*. The concordance thesis goes a step further by assuming that flourishing and happiness (when correctly conceptualised) are *two sides of the same coin*. As an impediment to one will also be an impediment to the other, and they form an interlocking psychological set, it is in principle enough to measure one to know that the state of the other.

I will not say more about complementarity in this article, but focus on the stronger thesis of flourishing–happiness concordance. In the following section, I approach it from two sides: that of a psychologist (Sheldon, 2013), who thinks we can know all there is to know about flourishing by tapping into happiness, and an Aristotelian philosopher (Annas, 2008; 2011), who thinks that we can account for (true, proper) happiness on the grounds of the constituents of flourishing only (more specifically, the virtues). I will spend more energy on dissecting the Aristotelian argument, both because that is where my own speciality lies and because it makes, psychologically, more radical claims than Sheldon's. In subsequent sections, I then explore possible counterexamples to the concordance thesis and elicit their implications.

The Concordance Thesis: Two Varieties

Psychologist Kennon Sheldon (2013) has written a sweeping, provocative chapter that takes swipes at the idea of flourishing as a uniquely identifiable psychological state that stands in need of its own measure. Sheldon is not simply rooting for *SWB* – in which case his paper would be

just one more piece of happiness rhetoric or rebuttal of a weaker complementarity thesis. Rather, Sheldon argues that what interests flourishing advocates can, for psychological reasons, be wholly and satisfactorily captured by *SWB*. Sheldon challenges large discursive traditions in a relatively short paper; his brisk presentation may, therefore, create the impression that he is too eager to cut the Gordian knot. However, it is easy to see where he is coming from and how his argument could be developed further.

Sheldon's thesis relies on what he calls an 'organismic perspective upon human nature'. The processes that make us grow and attain psychologically positive outcomes do not come in two separate boxes called 'the objective' and 'the subjective'. Rather those processes operate at a deep level of personality and encompass the whole person. In normal (or at least 'optimal') moral functioning, there is 'self-concordance' within the individual between goals, the satisfaction of universal needs (which Sheldon understands more or less along self-determination-theory lines) and happiness. In other words, if the individual is able to pursue goals that accurately represent her unique developing interests, values and dispositions, her needs are satisfied and happiness follows naturally. Because it promotes psychological need-satisfaction, self-concordance therefore predicts *SWB*. This means that the psychological qualities that flourishing theorists call 'eudaimonic' and want to measure separately are actually part of 'happiness itself'.

The remainder of Sheldon's paper is spent providing evidence for the claim that the predictors of *SWB* turn out to be exactly the kinds of things *eudaimonists* cherish. Most importantly, Sheldon thinks that *SWB* measures do already in fact – contrary to common objections – discriminate well between lower and higher forms of happiness. They do so simply by recording that people who are on a self-concordant life trajectory actually score higher on

SWB than those (e.g. crass materialists or addicts) who are not in the process of satisfying their deep psychological needs. If we acknowledge this repeated finding, the self-imposed division of subjective and objective measures collapses; why add additional measures if *SWB* already does the job well enough? In the long run at least, *SWB* ‘cannot be made from anything but the right ingredients’; objective thriving and subjective experiences go hand in hand.

Sheldon’s concordance thesis is *methodologically* quite radical for two reasons. The first is that he does not seem to think that current *SWB* measures need any adjustments to do the job of capturing what MacLeod (2015) would call ‘subjective wellbeing’; they do so admirably already. Second, Sheldon’s thesis is reductionist in the sense that although he has no qualms about using the concept of ‘flourishing’ or ‘objective thriving’ on an everyday understanding, he does not think that it serves a useful role in psychological theory or measurement. However, for reasons that become clearer shortly, Sheldon’s concordance thesis is not as radical *psychologically* as Annas’s Aristotelian view that I review below. Sheldon is, after all, talking about ‘optimal functioning’ and, as a psychologist, he is trading in psychological correlations which, even if strong, allow for statistical outliers and other anomalies. Pointing to an odd case of someone who seems to be satisfying the relevant universal needs but fails to score high on *SWB* does not as such, therefore, refute his concordance thesis. Such cases can be treated as bugs or noise, rather than devastating counterexamples, as long as they are not too frequent.

The second, and more psychologically radical, variety of concordance theory that bears exploration is that of Annas (2008; 2011). She attacks the flourishing–happiness division, so to speak, from the opposite direction to Sheldon’s. She argues that flourishing is reliably associated with a certain sort of happiness. If we can ascertain that a person is flourishing, on an Aristotelian understanding, we know that she is also, in the relevant sense, happy. Annas does

not use common Aristotelian phrases of pleasure ‘adorning’ or ‘crowning’ flourishing, but rather thinks of the relevant enjoyment as ‘not something extra to be added’ but rather as part of the way in which the flourishing-constitutive activity is performed (2011, p. 76). Thus, flourishing (in the sense of living virtuously) is a *sufficient condition* of living happily (2011, pp. 167–168).⁵ Annas’s thesis is less methodologically radical than Sheldon’s in the sense that she does not assume that current measures of either flourishing or happiness can do the job of confirming the relevant concordance; in fact, she does not say anything about those measures, and she is not, in any sense, a reductionist. Moreover, Annas is not talking about happiness in the broad sense encapsulated as *SWB*, but rather a certain kind of ‘Aristotelian happiness’ – involving pleasure in complete, uninterrupted activities – that she argues (in 2008 and 2011, chap. 5) corresponds admirably to the concept characterised in contemporary positive psychology as ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Because Annas does little, in her own view, other than elaborate upon Aristotle’s own concordance thesis, I will in what follows refer directly to Aristotle’s thesis. It is necessary, however, to explain briefly why psychologists might see Annas’s argument as novel. The standard interpretation of Aristotelian wellbeing theory is that of extreme objectivism in which pleasant feelings ‘do not define’ the good life in any way (MacLeod, 2015, pp. 1076, 1079).⁶ However, that is not how either Annas or I read Aristotle. For one thing, Aristotle’s ontological theory of selfhood is not a hard realist one. Rather, he was a ‘soft self-realist’ who took self-concept to be intimately incorporated in selfhood (see esp. Aristotle, 1985, pp. 97–98 [1123a33–1123b27]). In other words, he believed that who you think you are (or how you feel about yourself) is relevant to how you really are, deep down (Kristjánsson, 2010, chap. 2).

⁵⁵ This would not be my own take on Aristotle (Kristjánsson, 2017), but the subtly different exegeses do not matter for present purposes.

⁶ Cf. Haybron’s claim (2008, p. 32) that Aristotle did not have ‘a theory of happiness’ in the subjective sense.

For another thing, Aristotle's wellbeing theory seems explicitly to incorporate a certain component of a subjective account (namely, a certain kind of pleasure) in its very definition – or, as he puts it, to 'weave pleasure' into *eudaimonia* (1985, p. 203 [1153b14–15]; see further in Kristjánsson, 2013, chap. 2). For although Aristotle renounces the equation of happiness with pleasure as 'slavish' and fit only for 'grazing animals', he is also quick to observe that those who live well – the virtuous – necessarily enjoy the activities that make them flourish. Pleasure 'completes' their activities 'like the bloom on youths' (1985, pp. 7 [1095b19–20], 276 [1174b30–35]). Those pleasures are the natural accompaniments of virtuous activities; experiencing them is partly constitutive of flourishing. Not any old pleasure will do here, however. The pleasures experienced by the virtuous in the exercise of their virtues are pleasures in things that are pleasant 'in themselves' and 'by nature'; and they are the 'soul's pleasures' as distinct from pleasures of the body (1985, pp. 20 [1099a14–15] and 80 [1117b29–30]).

Aristotle's view is, more specifically, that we humans have a natural psychological propensity to take a certain kind of pleasure in being single-mindedly absorbed in unimpeded, self-realising and intrinsically (non-instrumentally) valuable activity. As motivationally unified (or what Sheldon would call highly self-concordant) beings, the virtuous enjoy the pleasures proper to virtuous acts. Those pleasures cannot be pursued directly, however, any more than the bloom on the cheeks of youths can be genuinely created by cosmetics; they must come from within. These pleasures are un-self-conscious in the sense that we are rarely, if ever, phenomenologically aware of their warm glow while we engage in the activity. For while engaging in it, we have just one occurrent desire: the desire to engage in the activity for its own sake. Only in retrospect do we realise how rewarding the activity was. However, because we actualise our end (*telos*) in our complete virtuous activities, such activities are not complete

without (and cannot, *pace* MacLeod, 2015, be defined independent of) the accompanying experience of pleasurable engagement.

Readers who are acquainted with the concept of flow will not have failed to spot the similarity between Aristotle's description of pleasure in unimpeded activities and typical description of flow-like experiences (as Annas, 2008, is quick to point out; cf. Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Aristotle does not seriously consider the possibility that anyone except the truly flourishing (namely, the virtuous) can experience this type of supervening happiness – which is, after all, not pleasure *simpliciter*, but the feeling of complete non-frustration and lack of inner conflict. As he puts it, 'we cannot have the just person's pleasure without being just' (1985, p. 272 [1173b30]). Conversely, Aristotle does not envisage the possibility that one can truly flourish without the experience of flow-happiness. He thinks, therefore, of flourishing–happiness concordance in terms of strict psychological necessity – which makes him, in MacLeod's (2015) terminology, a 'subjectivist' rather than an 'objectivist' (cf. Grönroos, 2015, p. 147).⁷

However, there is an important caveat here that is sometimes overlooked in Aristotelian scholarship. It is not the case 'that the active exercise of every virtue is pleasant; it is pleasant only in so far as we attain the end [of the virtue]' (1985, p. 79 [1117b15–16]). This caveat may seem to place an extreme limitation on Aristotelian concordance. After all, there are, arguably, a number of flourishing-constituting activities that cannot be 'completed' in a strict sense. Staying healthy, keeping a beautiful home and having a happy marriage are life-long 'open tasks' that can never be brought to a completion (Harðarson, 2016). Uses of the term 'complete' here import the danger of equivocation. In one sense, it can mean 'finished for good'; in another sense

⁷ To be sure, Aristotle grants that the virtuous person never becomes wholly miserable even if external misfortune prevents her from acting on, or fully actualising, her virtues (Aristotle, 1985, p. 26 [1100b33–35]). However, such a person is not fully flourishing and not fully happy. This idea is part of Aristotle's 4-level account of flourishing, ranging from misery, to lack of flourishing, to flourishing – and finally up to blessedness (*qua* flourishing with bonus external goods). See further in Kristjánsson (2017).

it can mean ‘having remained uninterrupted for an extended period of time’. Aristotle must be taken to mean the latter for his concordance thesis to remain plausible. Yet, even on that reading, we need to remember that short bursts of flourishing-constituting activity do not suffice to guarantee happiness; lack of concordance in such cases would not undermine the thesis.

There may be reason to argue that Aristotle is making a strong *conceptual* claim: that since (true) happiness is defined as the feeling that accompanies flourishing activities, flourishing entails happiness as its necessary and sufficient *logical* condition. I will make do here, however, with a weaker reading of Aristotle’s concordance thesis as one of (armchair) *psychology*: flourishing is, as a matter of psychological fact, necessary and sufficient for happiness, although it cannot be defined independently of happiness as its necessary outcome.⁸ Nevertheless, even on this psychological reading, Aristotle is making a more radical claim than Sheldon. He is not talking about strong correlations here, but rather ‘psychological necessity’, and his view of the ‘motivational unity’ of the virtuous agent (critiqued by Carr, 2009) is arguably even more demanding than Sheldon’s conception of the self-concordantly functioning individual.

Lorraine Besser-Jones (2012) has mounted a strong counterargument against Annas’s concordance thesis. It is not always entirely clear when she is challenging Annas’s reading of Aristotle and when she is simply arguing that Aristotle’s own view is psychologically wrong, but I will interpret her as wanting to say the latter. Not all virtuous activities are – Besser-Jones argues – of the sort that we take pleasure in independently of their logical connection to ‘virtue’. While some rare ones may be (such as acts of bravery that elevate us to a state of flow), most of the virtuous activities that Aristotle sees as flourishing-constituting are pretty dull and

⁸ As an analogy, consider the possibility that a certain brain state were found that turned out to be a necessary and sufficient condition of depression. It would still be impossible to define depression adequately without recourse to the accompanying feelings.

uninspiring *in themselves*. Keeping one's promise, when one does not care much for what has been promised, considerately picking up papers someone has dropped on the sidewalk, raising money for disaster sufferers, and so forth, are true virtuous activities but not likely to produce flow – unless we think of them, consciously and hard, as conducive to a virtuous end, but then they are no longer intrinsically motivating, as Aristotle's concordance thesis demands. However, as the virtuous person develops a state of wellbeing through engaging in those dull activities, while not enjoying them, they constitute a counterexample to the concordance thesis (Besser-Jones, 2012, p. 106).

The most plausible Aristotelian response to Besser-Jones's argument is to invoke the completeness caveat, explained above. Aristotle's variety of the concordance thesis does not require that all individual (flourishing-constituting) virtuous acts produce happiness *qua* flow, but only those that are engaged in for significant periods of time, without interruption. So, consider the person raising money for disaster relief. The thesis does not demand that each time she knocks on a door, she is in a state of flow. However, if she engaged in money-raising activities for a long time without experiencing the concomitant feelings of happiness, this would mean, psychologically, that her heart is not in it. If her heart is not in it, she is, according to Aristotle, not virtuous and motivationally unified but perhaps just self-controlled in the service of a good end. In that case, she would not be engaging in a flourishing-constituting activity, so although happiness does not supervene upon it, there is no threat to the concordance thesis.

We have now explored two varieties of the concordance thesis – coming from the psychological and philosophical sides, respectively. Whilst one is more radical methodologically and the other psychologically, they both imply that pure subjectivism and pure objectivism fail to do justice to the nature of human wellbeing, and that a mere complementary thesis does not go

far enough towards synthesis. Consequently, much of the debate about the divergent contours of wellbeing and different ways to measure it will be deemed misguided and superfluous. That, in itself, is a radical claim. But does it hold water?

Flourishing without Happiness

Let us now consider some possible counterexamples to the concordance thesis. Whilst those may not be fatal to Sheldon's version of the thesis, even if we accept their force (I return to that issue in the concluding section), they will at least threaten to undermine Aristotle's radical variety. In this section I explore cases of unhappy flourishers; in the next I turn to happy non-flourishers.

It is almost *de rigueur* to invoke Wittgenstein as an example of an unhappy flourisher. His famous last words, 'Tell them that I've had a wonderful life' (Monk, 1990, p. 579), are typically taken to mean that he considered himself to have flourished in life (see e.g. Tiberius & Hall, 2010, p. 215). However, by all accounts, he was a grumpy and miserable person with a serious happiness deficit. He does not even seem to have enjoyed writing his great works. Instead of taking him to the heights of flow, he evidently experienced the writing process as draining drudgery. The company of friends and students, who showered him with attention and affection, does not seem to have alleviated his lingering dissatisfaction with life.

Now, obviously most of what we know of Wittgenstein's 'inner life' (a designation that he would, by the way, have resented) is derived from hearsay and anecdotal evidence. Perhaps he was not as curmudgeonly 'on the inside' as he made himself out to be. Or perhaps he was just clinically depressed, in which case the concordance thesis need not be ruled out of court (for it is not about mentally ill people). However, if using Wittgenstein as an example grates on readers' ears, I ask them to replace him with some other *Miserable Thinker* of the better-be-an-unhappy-

Socrates-than-a-happy-pig type, and there are plenty of those around, not all of whom can be dismissed as being in a pathological condition.⁹

A more promising riposte is to argue that Wittgenstein did not really lead a flourishing life, despite his assertion to the contrary. He never ‘completed’ his activities in the sense of bringing them to a satisfactory end. He was constantly of the view that his philosophical output was incomplete, and he never produced the definitive philosophical masterpiece that he hoped for. I refer back to my earlier discussion of the two senses of ‘complete’. To be sure, in one sense Wittgenstein did not *complete* his philosophical journey, but that is a sense in which many flourishing-constituting activities can never be completed anyway. In a more reasonable sense – to which Aristotle’s caveat must be understood to refer – Wittgenstein did have extended uninterrupted periods in which to engage in intrinsically valuable activity; yet flow does not seem to have ‘followed naturally’, as it is supposed to do according to the concordance thesis.

Another version of this riposte would be to argue that Wittgenstein did not flourish because of lack of psychological unity. True, the argument would go, he actualised the supreme intellectual virtue of contemplation to the highest degree, but he did not exercise the more mundane moral and civic virtues that are necessary for a flourishing life. In response, we do know that Wittgenstein’s social skills left something to be desired. Yet he seems to have been capable of reciprocating friendships, and despite well-known bouts of bad temper and tactlessness, there is no good reason to taint him with a dearth of moral virtue. If we refuse to impute flourishing to Wittgenstein because he was not equally well developed in all areas, we are

⁹ To avoid the pathology objection, I leave out of consideration in this section a third possible counterexample, in addition to the *Miserable Thinker* and the *Philistine Do-Gooder* (explored below): that of the *Disgust-Tainted Flourisher*. By that description I mean someone like Nietzsche’s budding *Übermensch* who may start out following ‘slave morality’ – and to flourish in an ordinary sense – but then come to the conclusion that flourishing in that sense is only fit for pigs: filling him with revulsion. I take it that the *Disgust-Tainted Flourisher* may seem to many readers to be teetering at the brink of madness; hence I will not press that case here.

setting the bar too high. Flourishing is after all, on Aristotle's own account, a threshold concept, and one does not need to be perfect on all counts to cross the threshold.

Let us consider another counterexample: that of the *Philistine Do-Gooder*. Nick Hornby's novel *How to Be Good* tells the story of David, a married man who, at the beginning, is described by his wife as 'the definition of aggrieved. Permanently' (Hornby, 2001, p. 3). That description is well deserved: David is a miserable whinger whose attitude towards others is standoffish and disdainful. After undergoing a marriage crisis, however, and meeting a spiritual healer who sucks all wrath out of him, David undergoes a conversion and becomes a newborn do-gooder. His wife realises the change when David suddenly decides to give eighty pounds to a homeless child. From then on, David is a radically generous do-gooder who spends most of his time and money on trying to relieve the world's misery. Yet his efforts come to nothing and do not even give him any long-lasting inner feelings of warmth and accomplishment. He may be momentarily happy, but he is neither happy enough nor for long enough to satisfy the concordance thesis.

There are aspects to David's post-conversion character that may drain his case of its initial plausibility as that of a virtuous person without (sufficient) happiness. His generosity seems, for example, to be extreme rather than 'medial' as it should be on the Aristotelian model to constitute virtue. Yet, let us forget those aspects of the actual story and simply focus on someone who, like David, aspires to practise virtue with the utmost seriousness of purpose, yet fails to reap the rewards of flow.¹⁰

¹⁰ The Kantian view here would, obviously, be that David's moral goodness is enhanced rather than compromised by the non-appearance of an accompanying pleasant feeling – which shows how far removed the Kantian view is from the Aristotelian one, and how far-fetched it is to consider Kant to have subscribed to any sort of wellbeing theory.

Perhaps the *Philistine Do-Gooder* is not really flourishing because of spending all his energy on practical issues while lacking in intellectual depth. In other words, David may not be flourishing because he is a philistine. This riposte, however, sets the bar of flourishing too high.¹¹ David is not stupid, although he is not a deep thinker, and there is no reason to suppose that he is not exercising intellectual virtues to a satisfactory degree. He may not be flourishing to the supreme extent that Aristotle (1985) describes in Book 10, but he is surely flourishing in a sense that suffices to put a damper on the idea that happiness necessarily supervenes upon flourishing.

The worry may still obtrude that the *Philistine Do-Gooder* is not flourishing because his ‘heart is not in it’. He may be obsessed with doing the right things to satisfy his own sense of (Kantian) moral duty, or even to appear virtuous to others, but deep down he is not driven by virtue, and therefore it is no mystery that fecund happiness does not emerge. No doubt, do-gooders of this kind exist; however, David is not one of them. There is not a hint of vanity in his motivation and he is not a Kantian agent. He is truly intrinsically motivated to do the good: a consideration that seems non-co-tenable with the concordance thesis.

At the end of this section, residual concerns remain about the plausibility of the concordance thesis. The two counterexamples explored seem to militate against it. We are left with the impression that there are argumentative lapses in at least Aristotle’s and Annas’s version of the thesis, if not necessarily Sheldon’s. We may be forced to fall back on a more popularly held view, encapsulated in Wollstonecraft’s famous words that the flourishing person (in her sense of ‘the virtuous man’) can be ‘either gay or grave’ (2014, p. 122).

¹¹ This is, indeed, a point at which most contemporary Aristotelians would depart from Aristotle’s flourishing theory. While acknowledging that human beings’ flourishing requires a decent exercise of the capacity which most sets them apart from other animals, namely human reason, neo-Aristotelians tend to downplay the intellectual depth that Aristotle considered necessary for flourishing in the ideal sense.

Happiness without Flourishing

I will focus here on two putative counterexamples: of a not-unhappy-enough non-flourisher and a happy non-flourisher.¹² Let us begin with the *Happy Slave*. That case has been invoked so often in the wellbeing literature that a brief reminder suffices. Obviously, Haybron's (2008) earlier-mentioned observation about people being mistaken about their own happiness may apply here. So may the objection that even if the *Happy Slave* does experience some sort of 'flow' in his slavish activities, the feelings are not deep and fecund enough to count as the sort of happiness that would undermine the concordance thesis (although it is difficult to envisage accurate criteria for, and measurements of, the required 'depth'). Thus, perhaps the *Happy Slave* is not terribly happy after all, and the very title may be a misnomer. Yet the point remains that the '*Happy*' *Slave* is not as unhappy as he should be, *ex hypothesi*, according to the concordance thesis. This case is tricky, however, because of the possible levels of self-deception involved, which may border on the pathological (e.g. Stockholm syndrome). Rather than pursuing this case further, I turn, therefore, to a putatively non-pathological case: that of the *Torn Artist*.

In *World Light*, a 1937 novel by the Nobel laureate Halldór Laxness (2002), we encounter the (anti)-hero Ólafur Kárason and follow his chequered trajectory through life.¹³ Abandoned by his mother and living in squalor with an abusive foster family, Ólafur remains bedridden through much of his childhood. After being cured by a mystical figure, Ólafur embarks on a Quixotic journey of continued physical and emotional torments, ruinous love affairs, a tortured marriage, several children, shady dealings with crooked capitalists and

¹² For the same reason as in the previous section (see Note 9), I shelve here a third possible counterexample: of someone who is happy precisely in virtue of not flourishing (in the standard sense). I am thinking here, for instance, of the *Successful Sadist*. I worry that this case will be too easily susceptible to a pathology objection.

¹³ For a more detailed account of Ólafur Kárason's character and its implications for Aristotelian flourishing theory, see Kristjánsson (2016b).

supernatural encounters of varied provenance. Always the loser but never embittered or beaten, Ólafur strives to achieve his childhood vision of becoming a great poet; yet he never succeeds in achieving anything close to greatness, partly because of adverse circumstances, partly because of lack of any noticeable talent. In a life that only seems to offer recipes for disaster, Ólafur is sustained by one consolation: his quest for ‘the epiphanic resonance of the divine’, attained through glimpses since childhood, and recurring flashbulb recollections of those glimpses, where he comes ‘face to face with the inexpressible’ and experiences ‘infinite chorus glory and radiance’. In those moments of intense exaltation, especially when writing his poetry, Ólafur’s whole sense of self dissolves into ‘one sacred, tearful yearning’ to be united with something higher than himself – transfigured by infinite truth and beauty. Symbolically, at the end of his life, he embarks on a final redemptive journey up to a glacier, the earthly representation of his vision of transcendence, where the mountain meets the sky, and ‘becomes one with Heaven’.

Ólafur Kárson’s life is far away from that of Aristotelian flourishing. Deprived of moral luck and hampered by his own dearth of moral character and intellectual stamina, Ólafur’s life may, at first sight, seem to be best described as wilted and wretched rather than *eudaimon*. Yet there is something *exquisite* about its wretchedness. The experiences of ‘the epiphanic resonance of the divine’ give it meaning and unwavering purpose. Let us presume that Ólafur’s experiences of happiness were genuine rather than other-or-self-deceptive.¹⁴ Let us also presume that they had the sort of flow-like quality about them that Annas (drawing on Aristotle and Csikszentmihalyi) considers to be the natural concomitant of engagement in intrinsically valuable, flourishing-constituting activities (in this case, for example, the writing of poetry). But were they deep and long-lasting enough to pose a threat to the concordance thesis? There is no

¹⁴ The author’s account of the poet’s life and self-perceptions, throughout the novel, may perhaps be read as tongue-in-cheek and sarcastic. However, for present purposes, I take Ólafur’s perceptions of his own life at face value.

doubt about the former; indeed, Ólafur's moments of flow were arguably more profound than most so-called paragons of Aristotelian virtue will ever experience (Kristjánsson, 2016b). Whether they were long-lasting enough is another question. Ólafur seems to have experienced them mainly in short bursts of artistic creativity, which for him was real although it may have lacked objective (or acknowledged) artistic value. Yet he also seems to have had opportunities for relatively extended, uninterrupted periods of artistic activity, endowed with the 'resonance of the divine' – and if we insist that the true flourisher is in a state of constant flow, we are clearly setting the bar too high.¹⁵ I cannot, therefore, but conclude that the case of the *Torn Artist* is a further chink in the armour of the concordance thesis.

Concluding Remarks

I will not claim here that the counterexamples presented above constitute definitive refutations of the concordance thesis. However, at least they pose a serious threat to it, and I would go as far as saying that they undermine Aristotle's radical version. There seem to be unhappy flourishers (such as the *Miserable Thinker*), not-happy-enough flourishers (such as the *Philistine Do-Gooder*), happy non-flourishers (such as the *Torn Artist*) and not-unhappy-enough non-flourishers (such as the *Happy Slave*). I present the various permutations in Table 1, including the two cases that I reduced to notes for a particular reason explained there.

Table 1: Flourishing and Happiness Permutations

	<i>Flourishing</i>	<i>Not flourishing</i>
--	--------------------	------------------------

¹⁵ I do acknowledge that Ólafur seems to satisfy many of the unhappiness characteristics that Aristotle connects to the life of the vicious (1985, p. 247 [1166b11–28]). He suffers, from time to time, from self-hate and regret, and he destroys himself in the end. On Aristotle's strict conception, these are the results of the specific motivational disunity of the non-virtuous (see Grönroos, 2015). However, as I mention in the Concluding Remarks, Aristotle may have had too idealised a view of the motivational unity of the virtuous.

<i>Happiness</i>	Positive concordance (in line with the concordance thesis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Torn Artist • The Happy Slave • (The Successful Sadist)
<i>Not happiness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Miserable Thinker • The Philistine Do-Gooder • (The Disgust-Tainted Flourisher) 	Negative concordance (in line with the concordance thesis)

Readers may wonder if, because of my self-ascription as an Aristotelian philosopher, I have committed some sort of an academic patricide here. That is not the case. Most so-called Aristotelian philosophers nowadays, at least those working within moral philosophy, moral psychology and character education, are critical reconstructors rather than deferential reproducers. It is no news to those that Aristotle needs to be updated and corrected in various ways for contemporary consumption. For example, while dismissive of the penchant of his mentor, Plato, for idealisations of ‘forms’ in a transcendental realm, Aristotle himself can be accused of idealisations of actual people and objects in the world in which we live. He is thus commonly faulted for downplaying the extent to which even the truly virtuous may suffer from residues of pain and be afflicted with emotional ambivalence (Kristjánsson, 2013; cf. Carr, 2009). The counterarguments to the concordance thesis above are little more than variations on the common theme of showing how Aristotle over-idealised the motivational unity of the virtuous. Indeed, I believe Annas (2011) does the same with her well-known skill analogy of virtue (Kristjánsson, 2015, chap. 4). That said, there is much gained for empirically savvy philosophers from working under the stellar guidance of Aristotle’s naturalistic method, according to which all moral theorising is in the end answerable to empirical evidence. That method is also the reason why many psychologists – for instance within positive psychology –

like to do business with Aristotelian philosophers: as academics who are ready to meet them on their own turf.

There are two reasons why my counterexamples may not cut as much ice with concordance theorists in psychology, such as Sheldon. First, they may consider my reliance on anecdotal evidence and fictional (literary) examples symptomatic of the worst form of philosophical ‘armchair psychology’. Second, as I have mentioned at various junctures, Sheldon’s thesis is not couched in terms of psychological necessity, like Aristotle’s. So even if Sheldon happened to accept the relevance of my case stories, he could simply see them as statistical outliers. The concordance thesis could be strongly statistically significant although there are a few *Miserable Thinkers* around, for example, for whom some slack must be cut.

I venture to hypothesise that the counterexamples I have given are not just ‘bugs’ but fairly common in daily life. But I freely admit to say that in default of statistical evidence, simply relying on my own life experiences. Those experiences tell me that the world contains a significant number of unhappy flourishers and happy non-flourishers. As a follower of the Aristotelian naturalism explained in the preceding paragraph, however, I am no believer in an anti-empirical armchair psychology. I present these counterexamples here, rather, as ammunition for a hypothesis that needs to be tested empirically. There is already evidence of apparent discordance between flourishing and happiness, for example studies finding that while ‘most’ Americans take themselves to be ‘happy’, only two out of every ten adults are flourishing (cited in Crespo & Mesurado, 2015, p. 940). But because of the methodological misgivings expressed earlier about how flourishing is typically measured in such studies (e.g. by relying on self-reports and ignoring virtue-constructs), I acknowledge that my discordance hypothesis is still little more than a hunch.

Notice, however, that even if my ‘hypothesis’ were confirmed, the concordance thesis could still hold as a ‘rule of thumb’. I find that likely; Aristotle, Annas and Sheldon have given us reasons to believe that, *under ideal conditions*, flourishing and happiness go hand in hand. However, a rule of thumb does not deserve the title of a ‘thesis’, either about psychological necessity or strong empirical correlations. Notice also that nothing I have said in this article speaks against a weaker flourishing–happiness harmony thesis in terms of complementarity or hybridity. Perhaps there is no way to conceptualise or measure wellbeing adequately except by spreading our bets in the form of a mixed account and mixed measures of flourishing and happiness (however we may then decide to aggregate them). That consideration takes us right back to where we started: to the traditional objective–subjective wellbeing debate. If there is no shortcut through that debate, via a concordance thesis, then we simply need to continue to pursue it head-on, even if the incipient tensions between flourishing and happiness accounts get transformed into serious antagonisms, or call for painful trade-offs.

The concordance thesis constitutes a grand project, but from a philosophical perspective, there seems to be something too convenient about it. It is almost too good to be true that a historically significant debate about the content of the good life can be dissolved as a false dichotomy and a potential non-issue. My sympathies, as a philosopher, lie with Tiberius’s contention (2006, p. 497) that a theory of wellbeing cannot avoid being *normative* and take a stand on an issue that is controversial: not because of the essential relativity of the good, but because of its plurality and diversity (see Tiberius & Hall, 2010, p. 219). The injection of some good old normative argument into wellbeing research cannot be avoided because the question of the relative worth of flourishing versus happiness looks like a standard evaluative question; yet one that springs up at us with redoubled force because it concerns nothing less than the question

of what constitutes a good human life: a question with serious educational and political implications. Perhaps our ability to pose that question, coupled with our inability to answer it to everybody's satisfaction, is nothing less than the basic feature that sets us apart from the lower animals.¹⁶

Self-concordance (Sheldon, 2013) is a valuable attribute and those who attain it may achieve flourishing–happiness concordance in the bargain. But there are philosophical and psychological reasons to think that many achieve neither; yet can either flourish or be happy.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank David Carr, Anna Alexandrova, Matt Sinnicks and two anonymous referees of the present journal for helpful comments on an earlier draft. This article was written under the aegis of the *Virtue, Happiness, and Meaning of Life Project* (University of Chicago).

References

- Annas, J. (2008). The phenomenology of virtue. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 7(1), 21–34.
- Annas, J. (2011). *Intelligent virtue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Aristotle. (1985). *Nicomachean ethics*, trans. T. Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- Besser-Jones, L. (2012). The motivational state of the virtuous agent. *Philosophical Psychology*, 25(1), 93–108.

¹⁶ In the case of the lower animals, the distinction between objective and subjective wellbeing seems out of place. It would be odd to describe a parrot as flourishing as a parrot, but not sufficiently happy, or vice versa. This may be the reason why we talk about 'animal welfare' rather than 'animal wellbeing' except in the case of animals high up in the developmental ladder. I am grateful to Alistair Lawrence for helping me think this issue through.

- Carr, D. (2009). Virtue, mixed emotions and moral ambivalence. *Philosophy*, 84(1), 31–46.
- Crespo, R. F. & Mesurado, B. (2015). Happiness economics, eudaimonia and positive psychology: From happiness economics to flourishing economics. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 16(4), 931–946.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Diener, E. (2012). New findings and future directions for subjective well-being research. *American Psychologist*, 67(8), 590–597.
- Fowers, B. (2016). Aristotle on eudaimonia: On the virtue of returning to the source. In J. Vittersø (Ed.), *Handbook of eudaimonic well-being* (pp. 67–84). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Grönroos, G. (2015). Why is Aristotle's vicious person miserable? In Ø. Rabbås, E. K. Emilsson, H. Fossheim & M. Tuominen (Eds.), *The quest for the good life: Ancient philosophers on happiness* (pp. 146–163). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harðarson, A. (2016). Aims of education: How to resist the temptation of technocratic models. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, in press.
- Haybron, D. M. (2008). *The pursuit of unhappiness: The elusive psychology of well-being*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hornby, N. (2001). *How to be good*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Huppert, F. & So, T. T. C. (2009). What percentage of people in Europe are flourishing and what characterises them? Retrieved January 27, 2017, from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.550.8290&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Huppert, F. & So, T. T. C. (2013). Flourishing across Europe: Application of a new conceptual framework for defining well-being. *Social Indicators Research*, 110(3), 837–861.

- Keyes, C. L. M., Shmotkin, C., & Ryff, C. D. (2002). Optimizing well-being: The empirical encounter of two traditions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(6), 1007–1022.
- Keyes, C. L. M. & Annas, J. (2009). Feeling good and functioning well: Distinctive concepts in ancient philosophy and contemporary science. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(3), 197–201.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2010). *The self and its emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2013). *Virtues and vices in positive psychology: A philosophical critique*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2015). *Aristotelian character education*. London: Routledge.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2016a). A philosophical critique of psychological studies of emotion: The example of jealousy. *Philosophical Explorations*, 19(3), 238–251.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2016b). Flourishing as the aim of education: Towards an extended, ‘enchanted’ Aristotelian account. *Oxford Review of Education*, 42(6), 707–720.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2017). Recent work on flourishing as the aim of education: A critical review. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 65(1), 87–107.
- Laxness, H. (2002). *World light*, trans. M. Magnússon. London: Vintage Books.
- MacLeod, A. K. (2015). Well-being: Objectivism, subjectivism or sobjectivism? *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 16(4), 1073–1089.
- Mill, J. S. (1863). *Utilitarianism*. London: Parker, Son & Bourn.
- Monk, R. (1990). *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The duty of a genius*. New York: Penguin.
- Oswald, A. J., & Wu, S. (2010). Objective confirmations of subjective measures of human well-being: Evidence from the U.S.A. *Science*, 327(5965), 576–579.

- Peterson, C. & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Proctor, C. & Tweed, R. (2016). Measuring eudaimonic well-being. In J. Vittersø (Ed.), *Handbook of eudaimonic well-being* (pp. 277–294). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 141–166.
- Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081.
- Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(4), 719–727.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York: Free Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York: Free Press.
- Sheldon, K. M. (2013). Individual daimon, universal needs, and subjective well-being: Happiness as the natural consequence of a life well lived. In A. S. Waterman (Ed.), *The best within us: Positive psychology perspectives on eudaimonia* (pp. 207–226). Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Tiberius, V. (2006). Well-being: Psychological research for philosophers. *Philosophy Compass*, 1(5), 493–505.
- Tiberius, V., & Hall, A. (2010). Normative theory and psychological research: Hedonism, eudaimonism, and why it matters. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 5(3), 212–225.

Vittersø, J. (2016). The most important idea in the world: An introduction. In J. Vittersø (Ed.), *Handbook of eudaimonic well-being* (pp. 1–24). Dordrecht: Springer.

Wollstonecraft, M. (2014). *A vindication of the rights of woman*. New Haven: Yale University Press.